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SUBJECT: IRELAND APPLAUDS AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN POLICY REVIEW

REF: STATE 14097

Classified By: Pol/Econ Section Chief Ted Pierce;
Reasons: 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) EMBOFFS delivered reftel demarche on February 18, 2009 to Isolde Moylan, Director, Asia and Oceania Division, Department of Foreign Affairs. Moylan indicated that Ireland is very receptive to the planned policy review and intends to provide views on the questions posed in reftel. She recommended that the USG policy review group consult with Irish national Michael Semple, an independent advisor on Afghanistan to Foreign Minister Micheal Martin. In a February 15 congratulatory letter to Secretary Clinton, the Foreign Minister expressed interest in discussing how Ireland and the U.S. could work together more closely in resolving international conflicts. Greater Irish involvement in non-military objectives in Afghanistan) perhaps even Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLTs)) should be part of any future high-level discussions with the Irish.

¶2. (C) Moylan was very receptive to the planned policy review. She highlighted Ireland's view that the international community's priorities in Afghanistan and FATA in Pakistan needed to extend beyond military intervention. Contributions to conflict resolution, humanitarian assistance, development, capacity building, and peacekeeping are all clearly needed, Moylan said. (Note: Ireland has committed seven troops to HQISAF through NATO's Partnership for Peace program. Since 2005, Irish Aid has allocated over euro 16 million (USD 20.3 million) to Afghanistan in relief, recovery, and development assistance. End note.) At the same time, Moylan noted, the international community should seek realistic and achievable goals in Afghanistan, taking into account the cultures and history of the region. She suggested that transplanting a Western-style government into Afghanistan was not realistic and that the international community should work with the traditional power structures of Afghanistan to achieve its goals) including elements of the Taliban who are willing to defect from hard-core irreconcilable factions.

¶3. (C) Moylan expressed deep appreciation that President Obama was consulting with friends and allies, and that the USG was seeking Ireland's view. She said she would discuss our demarche widely within the Irish Government in order to come up with a comprehensive response to the questions posed.

¶4. (C) Moylan referred to the expertise and work in Afghanistan of Irish national Michael Semple, who is an important independent advisor on Afghanistan to Minister for Foreign Affairs Micheal Martin. According to Moylan, Semple has worked in Afghanistan for many years, speaks local languages fluently, and understands the country's complex tribal cultures. (Note: Semple, who was working for the EU at the time, was one of the western officials expelled by President Karzai in December 2007 for allegedly talking to the Taliban. End note.) Moylan recommend that the USG

policy review group consult with Semple.

15. (C) Comment: During numerous previous discussions with top Irish officials, they have made it clear that Ireland does not plan to increase its troop strength in Afghanistan. However, on February 15 Foreign Minister Martin wrote to Secretary Clinton congratulating her on being sworn in as Secretary of State. In his letter he invited the Secretary to visit Ireland. Among other things, he suggested, they could discuss &how we might work more closely in certain areas such as conflict resolution.⁸ Greater contribution to non-military objectives in Afghanistan) perhaps even to Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLTs)) should be part of any future high-level discussions with the Irish.
FAUCHER